

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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TAGS: EGEN, UN, ECOSOC, EEC
SUBJECT: VIEW OF EC COMMISSION ON UN OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

REF: (A) USUN 606, (B) BRUSSELS 2398

1. MISSION OFFICER AND VISITING EUR/RPE OFFICER KURSCH
DISCUSSED UN OVERVIEW COMMITTEE WITH ODILE QUINTIN,
ASSISTANT ON NORTH-SOUTH MATTERS TO DEPUTY DIRECTOR
GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CASPARI. QUINTIN, WHO HAD
ATTENDED THE COMMITTEE'S ORGANIZATION MEETING IN NEW
YORK, SAID THAT SHE SHARED THE US VIEW THAT THE OVERVIEW
COMMITTEE HAD GOTTEN OFF TO A POSITIVE START. SHE
ATTRIBUTED THIS IN PART TO EFFECTIVE COORDINATION BETWEEN
THE GROUP-B COUNTRIES AND TO THE CONSTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP
ROLE BY THE US. SHE ALSO FELT THAT THE G-77 COUNTRIES
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HAD BEEN RELATIVELY MODERATE AT THE MEETING, AND THAT
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JAZAIRI HAD BEEN SURPRISINGLY
EFFECTIVE IN ASSURING A CONSTRUCTIVE BEGINNING AND IN
AVOIDING CONFRONTATION. SHE FURTHER NOTED THAT THE
MEMBER STATES HAD MAINTAINED A UNITED POSITION WHICH
HAD INCREASED EC EFFECTIVENESS.

2. IN SPITE OF THE GOOD START, HOWEVER, QUINTIN SAID THE COMMISSION FELT THERE COULD BE TROUBLES AHEAD. THE ULTIMATE ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE IS STILL NOT CLEAR. WILL IT BECOME A NEW CIEC, BUT IN THE UN FRAMEWORK? WILL IT BE PRIMARILY "PREPARATORY ORGANIZATION" FOR THE 1980 UN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON NORTH/SOUTH ISSUES? WILL IT BE A SERIOUS AND CONSTRUCTIVE MECHANISM IN REGARD TO NORTH/SOUTH ISSUES? OR WILL IT DEGENERATE INTO A FORUM FOR EXCHANGES OF POLITICAL RHETORIC? SHE FEARED THE TENDENCY FOR POLITICAL RHETORIC AS THE G-77 INCREASES PRESSURE TO HAVE THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE GET INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATIONS ON SPECIFIC SUBJECTS. HOLDING TWO LONG MEETINGS SO CLOSE TOGETHER THIS SPRING WILL MAKE IT HARDER TO RESIST THE PRESSURE SHE THOUGHT. SHE ALSO FELT THAT IN FUTURE MEETINGS MORE G-77 DELEGATES WOULD COME FROM CAPITALS WHICH INVARIABLY HARDENS THE ATTITUDES OF THE G-77 AS A WHOLE.

3. QUINTIN FELT THE G-77 WOULD SOONER OR LATER EXERT PRESSURE TO HOLD "CRISIS MEETINGS" OF THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE ON NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES, SUCH AS LDC DEBT RELIEF IF "FAVORABLE" DECISIONS ARE NOT REACHED AT THE MARCH UNCTAD TDB MINISTERIAL MEETING OR THE COMMON FUND IF GROUP-B COUNTRIES "POSTPONE" EXCESSIVELY RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS.

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4. REGARDING THE AGENDA FOR THE MAY MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE, QUINTIN SAID THAT THE COMMISSION IS RECOMMENDING THAT THE COMMUNITY NOT TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO SUBMIT BY MARCH 15 SUB-ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED UNDER THE "TRANSFER OF RESOURCES" AGENDA ITEM UNLESS THE NATURE OF THOSE SUB-ITEMS SUGGESTED BY THE G-77 OR OTHER STATES MAKE AN EC SUBMITTAL DESIRABLE. THE COMMISSION IS PREPARING A WRITTEN CONTRIBUTION TO AGENDA ITEM 1 ON THE WORLD ECONOMY TO BE SUBMITTED BY APRIL 7 BY DENMARK ON BEHALF OF THE EC MEMBER STATES (WHO SHE SAID PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT MAKE SEPARATE CONTRIBUTIONS). SHE SAID THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE DESIRABILITY OF ASSURING THAT THIS CONTRIBUTION IS HARMONIZED WITH THAT OF THE US AND OTHER GROUP-B COUNTRIES. HINTON

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